Princess Ai™

Destitution

1

By Misaho Kujiradou, Courtney Love & D.J. Milky

TOKYOPOP®

YOU MUST...
...BRING HER BACK ALIVE.

...PRINCESS AI!
DIVA OF THOSE DREADFUL HUMANS...

THE LAST MEMBER OF THAT REPULSIVE ROYAL FAMILY WILL NOT ESCAPE!
.....
THE SECOND REVOLUTION WILL PREVAIL.
AI...
...THAT BITCH WHO SEDUCED NORA?
GRRR
YES...
CAPTURE HER SO WE MAY FINALLY REDEEM OUR HONOR WITH SWEET REVENGE!

Princess Ai™

ILLUSTRATION BY
RAMAZAN ID

Princess Ai™

VOLUME 1: DESTITUTION

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TOKYOPOP®

HAMBURG // LONDON // LOS ANGELES // TOKYO

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Princess

CHAPTER 1

IT'S ALRIGHT MY GREEN.
THE STREET OR WHAT?

MY NAME...

FLASH

HOW WEIRD...

...I CAN'T REMEMBER ...

IS tHIS a trasH DUMP?

I...

um...

MY NAME IS...

...AI.

...I'VE SEEN IT BEFORE.

THIS PLACE..

THERE WERE PICTURES IN BOOKS I READ.

It's tHat Planet called earth.

I ALSO RAN AWAY...

A CITY OF LONELY RUNAWAYS.

IT WAS DARK, AND THERE WAS A FLASH...! I CAME HERE LOOKING FOR SOMETHING IMPORTANT. SOMETHING ONLY I CAN FIND...

BUT FROM WHAT? FROM WHERE?

ちら...

SO MUCH GOING ON... BUT IT FEELS SO EMPTY...

WHOA! CHECK HER OUT!

...BEING SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE YET ALWAYS FEELING ALONE.

I FEEL SO ALONE...

BUT IT FEELS FAMILIAR...

"TOKYO"... PLANET EARTH.

HMMM.. SO THIS PLACE IS CALLED "TOKYO."

無 IGNORE 視

SEE YA AROUND!

HEY, BABY, YOU LOST?

I KNOW TOKYO LIKE THE BACK OF MY HAND! LET ME SHOW YA AROUND.

I WONDER WHAT MADE ME TRAVEL ALL THE WAY HERE TO TOKYO?

WHAT WAS IT?

WHAT MADE ME COME HERE?

WAS IT RANDOM?

PART OF A PLAN?

cool threads, but a little plain for me...

City of Roses

I KNOW ONE THING FOR SURE...

THERE'S SOMETHING IMPORTANT HERE FOR ME TO FIND...

HEY!

WHACK

WHAT THE--?! ASSHOLE!

GIVE ME THAT BACK!!

SLAM

TACKLE

GIVE HER BACK WHAT YOU STOLE!

UGGHH

I CAN'T BELIVE THAT JERK-- STEALING FROM ME!

HEY!

THAT'S MY BOX...

DON'T TOUCH IT!!

--IT'S ALL PART OF MY DESTINY.

HMPH

JEEZ...

--SOMETHING IMPORTANT FOR ME TO FIND.

Ready!!!
Fight!
BACK OFF... I'M WARNING YOU!
HEY!
UH OH.. IS HE PISSED?
I SHOULDN'T HAVE YELLED AT HIM...HE WAS ONLY TRYING TO HELP ME.
okay, SO I overreacted
SEEMS LIKE THESE PEOPLE DON'T UNDERSTAND THE POWER OF MY HEART-SHAPED BOX...
YOU'RE NOT GONNA TURN HIM IN?
Beyond this finger is our punk thief.
HEE!

What country are you from, anyway?

HANG HIM!

TURN HIM IN! SURE, THAT PUNK PISSED ME OFF, BUT IT'S NO REASON TO HANG HIM!

GOOD THING THIS SNAPS BACK IN...

かぱ。

Tee Hee Hee!

WHAT'S SO FUNNY!

YOU DON'T GET IT, DO YOU! THIS BOX IS THE ONLY CONNECTION BACK TO MY HOME. I CAN'T LOSE IT!

I can't quite recall Home, but Hey...

YOU KNOW, THEY SAY JAPAN IS A SAFE PLACE, BUT THIS AREA OF SHINJUKU CAN GET PRETTY SHADY.

AH, MY BEAUTIFUL HEART-SHAPED BOX.

THAT WAS STUPID, CHASING THAT PUNK. WHAT IF HE WAS PACKING HEAT!

LOOK, I APPRECIATE YOU HELPING ME.

IT'S COOL. GLAD YOU GOT IT BACK.

HEY--

--IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS! THE POINT IS IT'S SPECIAL TO ME.

SO WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT THAT BOX OF YOURS, ANYWAYS?

I FEEL LIKE I KNOW HIM...

THIS GUY.

Y'KNOW..

...I HAVE A FEELING THAT YOUR BOX ISN'T THE ONLY THING THAT'S SPECIAL ABOUT YOU.

GET OUTTA HERE...

...THAT'S WHERE I WORK.

HIS EYES...

...THEY'RE SUCH A BEAUTIFUL CRYSTAL BLUE.

We'll just leave this punk under here...

WHERE ARE YOU HEADED?

I'M ON MY WAY TO WORK, BUT...

HUH?

UM--

...I CAN PROBABLY WALK YOU PART OF THE WAY.

UM...THE SHINJUKU... UNIVERSITY-- UM--LIBRARY...

REALLY?

I HAVE NO CLUE. BETTER WING THIS ONE... WHAT'S HIS TAG SAY?

squint

A BIT DISTANT-- JUST LIKE HIM.

BUT THAT DISTANT BLUE... IT'S PULLING ME IN.

WHY NOT?

SO, WE MIGHT AS WELL HEAD OVER TOGETHER...

HE'LL KNOW I FAKED THE WHOLE SHINJUKU UNIVERSITY THING.

As if he cares...

I HAVE SO MANY QUESTIONS, BUT I CAN'T ASK HIM...

Shinjuku University

新宿大学

TIME TO TAKE A SHORT CUT.

HUH?

THIS GOES TO THE LIBRARY.

THIS CHOPS OFF FIVE MINUTES EASY. ALWAYS THE DIFFERENCE IN BEING LATE TO WORK...

Mew Mew

A LITTLE *HELP* HERE...

OH, THAT'S CLOVER.

Meow

Meow

CLOVER'S PAD

Sunzkit

SHE'S GIVING BIRTH!!

SOUNDS ABOUT RIGHT. CLOVER'S LOOKING ABOUT TO BURST.

IT'S A TINY KITTEN! AMAZING!

A LOCAL STRAY WHO THINKS SHE'S A STUDENT HERE.

CLOVER ...?

SOME DUDE KNOCKED HER UP

LOOK!

SHE LOOKS LIKE SHE'S IN PAIN.

THERE'S SOMETHING MAGICAL ABOUT THIS MOMENT...

COME ON, LET'S LEAVE CLOVER BE.

SHE COULD PROBABLY USE HER PRIVACY.

HOLD ON!

LET'S JUST WATCH.

I WON'T SAY A WORD.

THERE'S A WHOLE BUNCH OF LITTLE CLOVERS NOW. IT'S SO INCREDIBLE.

WOW...

Mew

WORDS KEEP COMIN' OUT...

HERE COMES ANOTHER ONE.

THAT'S IT, CLOVER. YOU'RE DOING GREAT.

... IT ALWAYS SEEMS LIKE I GET TO WITNESS THE BIRTH OF SOMETHING NEW.

I...

...DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT...

CLOVER'S PAD

Sunzkit

WHAT?!

THE FIRST DAY OF SPRING.

...ETERNAL SPRING.

...LIKE...

ALMOST...

COME TO THINK OF IT, TODAY *IS* THE FIRST DAY OF SPRING.

SHOULDN'T I HAVE TODAY OFF?

NOW HE REALLY THINKS I'M WACKO.

Okay.

HEY!

CRASH!

AGH!

SLIP

WHAT ...?

THAT'S JUST TOO WEIRD...

I...

...JUST SLIPPED ON A ROCK...

...YOU'RE... HEAVY...

PLEEZ GET OFF ME

UM...

I'M SORRY.

HE SAYS JUST THE RIGHT THING TO SHAKE ME UP...

nice cleavage, tho...

I Hope He Doesn't think I Just Wanted to get on top of him...

OKAY, THAT WAS EMBARRASSING...

HOLD ON, KENT!

KENT, YOU'RE LATE, MAN...

SO?

DO YOU KNOW HER?!

Hook me up, man!

DAISUKE, LET GO OF MY SHIRT.

Dude she's way hotter than that chick Erica YOSHIKAWA from foreign studies...

I'VE NEVER SEEN HER AROUND BEFORE!

KENT, WHO'S THAT CHICK?!

CALM DOWN...

ONLY STUDENTS ARE ALLOWED IN THE LIBRARY.

MAY I SEE YOUR STUDENT I.D PLEASE?

Punch the clock.

...SOME FRIEND HE IS...

TAP TAP

MAN, SHE IS TOO HOT!!

?

SHE'S A NEW INTERNATIONAL STUDENT.

SHE DOESN'T HAVE HER I.D. YET.

DO YOU HAVE AN I.D. LIKE THIS?

SEE THIS?

WELL, I'LL LET IT GO THIS TIME...

GIVE HER A BREAK, DAISUKE.

OKAY!

THIS GUY... KENT...

NO BIGGIE...

BUT HOW 'BOUT I GET A DATE IN EXCHANGE!

Kent, HOOK ME UP, BRO!

I'LL SHOW YOU AROUND THE LIBRARY...

WEL...!

UM...

SURE. THANKS.

I FEEL LIKE I CAN TRUST HIM.

SOMETHING ABOUT HIM FEELS SO NATURAL, SO DIFFERENT THAN OTHER GUYS...

キン

I'VE ONLY REALLY FELT THIS WAY ONCE BEFORE. BUT MY MEMORIES ARE SO FADED. I JUST REMEMBER THE WARMTH.

ALL THESE BOOKS...!

I CAN ALMOST MAKE OUT HIS FACE.

WHO WAS HE...?

WELL, THERE'S TONS OF THOSE. AN ART BOOK OR AN ENCYCLOPEDIA?

HE'S ANOTHER PIECE IN THIS SCATTERED PUZZLE OF MINE...

KENT'S THE ONE WHO BROUGHT ME HERE...

JUST A LITTLE

IT'S COMING BACK TO ME!

THERE'S SOMETHING HIDDEN IN THESE BOOKS. I CAN FEEL IT.

WHERE CAN I FIND A BOOK THAT'S GOT ILLUSTRATIONS IN IT?

IF ONLY I CAN FIND WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR-- WHATEVER THAT'S SUPPOSED TO BE.

I WANT TO SEE ALL OF THEM.

YOU'RE ASKIN' ME...?

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

THIS ONE...

WOW, SHE'S READING 'EM ALL ...

IT'S TIME FOR HIS SHIFT, THAT BUTTHOLE.

WHERE'S KENT?

That loser's so dazed he forgot his cell...

GO AHEAD. I'LL BE FINE.

HEY, I'M LATE FOR MY SHIFT.

HM?!

THERE'S NO... TITLE?

IT LOOKS REALLY OLD.

ALL THE PAGES ARE BLANK!

WHAT'S WITH THIS BOOK...?

HERE'S SOMETHING ALMOST COMPLETELY FADED..

SOME SORT OF CREST...

WAIT...

I GUESS I WAS TIRED..

KENT HELPED ME OUT, BUT I'VE GOT TO LET HIM GO. I DON'T WANT TO GET HIM MIXED UP IN ANYTHING...

SOMETHING TELLS ME IF I ENDED UP HERE ON EARTH BY RUNNING AWAY, I'M PROBABLY BEING TRACKED DOWN.

SO WHERE DO I GO NOW..?

I FELL ASLEEP

Attention! The library will be closing in five minutes.

THAT GIRL...

...SHE HAD A REALLY NICE VOICE...

THIS 'S THE PLACE

LET'S PARTY TONIGHT!

よれ

よれ

KENT...

REALITY SUCKS. HOW AM I GONNA GET SOME FOOD?

JEEZ, I'M HUNGRY...

ONE RAMEN, PLEASE.

I WON'T FORGET YOU...

GOOD STUFF.

COME AGAIN!

THAT MUST BE THE MONEY THEY USE HERE.

HEY!

GOT A SECOND?

NOW HOW DO I GET MY HANDS ON THAT STUFF?

WELL, IT'S REALLY TASTY FISH. HOW ABOUT TRYING IT?

YOU'VE NEVER HAD IT?

SUSHI?

YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY NOT FROM AROUND HERE.

hiccup

CAN I TREAT YOU TO SOME SUSHI?

.....

BRRRR

YEP.

LET'S GO HAVE SOME.

TASTY? IS IT FOOD?

もぐ

もぐ

UH HUH.

SO, DO YOU LIKE SUSHI?

UH UH.

DO YOU LIKE ME?

DRAT...

I WON'T TELL.

SO, WHAT COUNTRY ARE YOU FROM?

I WILL TAKE CARE OF ALL YOUR NEEDS, AND YOU TAKE CARE OF MINE...

DON'T PLAY STUPID. YOU KNOW, SUGAR DADDY...

SUGAR DADDY?

IS HE OFFERING ME MONEY?

LET ME BE YOUR SUGAR DADDY.

HERE, I'LL TREAT YOU AGAIN.

COME ON!

UH... NEVER... MIND...

DON'T TOUCH ME!

OWW!

WHATEVER IT WAS THAT BROUGHT ME HERE...

...THE REST IS NOW IN MY HANDS.

That SUSHI stuff was GOOD...

Struck out again...

I GUESS I NEED MONEY TO GET BY IN THIS WORLD.

BUT IT'S GOT TO BE ON MY TERMS.

I CAN MAKE IT ON MY OWN.

Thank you...

IF IT'S MONEY I NEED TO GET BY..

Far beyond the heavens above...

HE'S MAKING MONEY WITH MUSIC!

HM... WHAT'S THIS!

Someone must have sent you straight to me...

I MAY NOT REMEMBER MUCH, BUT I DO REMEMBER HOW MUCH I'VE ALWAYS LOVED MUSIC...

...I KNOW THAT MUSIC AND SONG WERE ALWAYS PART OF ME.

BEFORE I CAME TO THIS WORLD...

I WOULD SING...

...TO FORGET EVERYTHING BAD AROUND ME.

SONG ALWAYS HAD THE POWER TO HEAL.

WHAT'S THAT SOUND?

HM?

NOW THAT'S A COOL VOICE!

...WHY I CAN'T GET HIM OUT OF MY MIND.

KENT...

...THIS SONG'S FOR YOU.

I WONDER...

THAT GIRL-- SHE CAN REALLY SING!

MAN, THAT'S A COOL SOUND.

IS THAT A STREET PERFORMANCE? LET'S CHECK IT OUT!

THANKS TO *YOU* I MADE TEN TIMES MORE THAN I USUALLY DO.

I REALLY ENJOYED MYSELF.

THANK YOU.

ALRIGHT!

YEAH!

encore!

Awesome!

!

UM--

EXCUSE ME, MA'AM.

PERFORM?

Was I performing? I didn't even notice.

HEY...

WHERE'D FA'AN GO...?!

WERE YOU THE ONE SINGING JUST NOW?

YOU'RE REALLY GOOD!

LET'S PERFORM AGAIN SOMETIME.

MY NAME'S FA'AN.

.. WANTED TO INVITE YOU TO PERFORM AT OUR CLUB.

SORRY, BUT I JUST...

You're a pretty tall girl...

HEY, WHY'D YOU GO AND INTERRUPT ME?! I WAS TALKING TO THAT MUSICIAN!

HERE IT IS.

CLUB Cupid

WHY DON'T YOU CHECK OUT THE PLACE?

WELCOME TO CLUB♡CUPID!

HM?

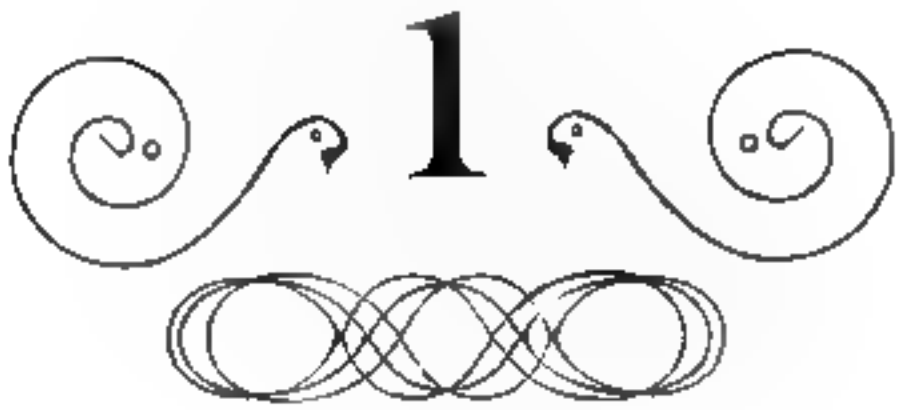
YOU CAN MAKE SOME GOOD MONEY.

PERFORM?

IF I CAN MAKE MONEY BY PERFORMING MY MUSIC, I CAN SPEND MY TIME SEARCHING FOR ANSWERS...

THAT WOULD BE A GREAT START TO SOLVING MY PROBLEMS.

CHAPTER



FIN

CHAPTER 2

UM, SURE.

WHY DON'T YOU SHOW OUR NEW RECRUIT AROUND WHILE I GO CALL THE BOSS!

THIS WAY, PLEASE.

SOMEONE'S ON STAGE...!

YOU GO, JEN! ♡

definitely... ...a high-class joint!

NOW THIS IS A CLUB!

ALRIGHT JEN! ♡

I GET TO HANG OUT IN A HIGH-CLASS CLUB, DRINK CHAMPAGNE AND SING ON STAGE!

THIS JOB IS PERFECT FOR ME!

THAT SHOULD BE ME ON STAGE...

...I'LL KNOW HOW TO GET THE CROWD GOING!

AND the pay's GOOD too!

HM?

わん わん

HERE HE IS.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN WORKING AT CLUB CUPID.

YOU MUST BE AI.

TAKE IT OFF!!

...A STRIP CLUB...?!

がくっ

THIS IS...

<" ﾚﾉ

I WANT TO SEE THE MANAGER-- NOW!

THIS WAY, PLEASE...

LET ME MAKE MYSELF CLEAR. I'LL SING, BUT NO MORE!

I'M NOT STEPPING ANYWHERE-- OR *STRIPPING.*

ARE YOU THE MANAGER?

PLEASE CALL ME SHINJI. WHY DON'T WE STEP INTO MY OFFICE?

WHY, YOU...!

AI, ALL MY GIRLS STRIP.

IT'S OKAY-- BACK OFF.

BUT I CAN PROMISE YOU ONE THING-- YOU WON'T REGRET LETTING ME SING ON YOUR STAGE.

...MY BODY IS SACRED, SO IT'S A NO-GO.

YOUR SCOUT RECRUITED ME-- NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND.

LOOK...

I'LL EXPECT YOU TOMORROW EVENING AT EIGHT O'CLOCK.

YOU'VE GOT IT.

FEEL FREE TO WEAR AS MUCH OR AS LITTLE CLOTHING AS YOU'D LIKE.

OKAY-- LET'S GIVE IT A SHOT.

REALLY?

IF ONLY I HAD A PLACE TO SLEEP

NOW I CAN FOCUS ON FIGURING OUT WHERE I CAME FROM

IT SUCKS BEING HOMELESS

WELL, THAT TAKES CARE OF MY MONEY PROBLEM

THE ONLY THING I'VE GOT IS MY HEART-SHAPED BOX

!

SOMETHING DOESN'T

WHAT IS IT TELLING ME ?

IS SOMEONE...

FOLLOWING ME ?!

...AI!

I THINK I'LL BE SAFE HERE WITH YOU.

I WON'T GET IN YOUR WAY.

SORRY, CLOVER.

MY BOX HAS STOPPED FLASHING...

WILL I EVER FIND OUT WHAT'S SO IMPORTANT...?

MY FADED MEMORIES, MY DISTANT EMOTIONS...

AND WHAT I'M RUNNING AWAY FROM...?

THERE IS SOMETHING MAGICAL HERE...

WILL THIS LONELINESS INSIDE CONTINUE TO LINGER?

IT'S BEEN A LONG DAY...

CLOVER'S PAD

BUT I'M SO COLD...

...I CAN FEEL IT

I JUST WISH I COULD ONCE AGAIN FEEL THAT WARMTH I FELT BEFORE...

AND LONELY...

キュピ
キュピ

I DON'T PARTICULARLY LIKE TRIPPING OVER SLEEPING HOMELESS GIRLS ON MY WAY TO WORK AND CARRYING THEM TO MY APARTMENT WHEN THEY WON'T WAKE UP ISN'T TOO FUN, EITHER.

ABOUT TIME YOU WOKE UP

WHAT AM I DOING HERE?!

Kent...?

AGGH!

KENT...

HE BROUGHT ME HERE..

I MUST HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP.

BESIDES, YOU WERE SHIVERING FROM THE COLD.

WHAT WERE YOU DOING SLEEPING THERE?!

IT'S WARM HERE...

YOU'RE LUCKY IT WAS ME WHO FOUND YOU. WHO KNOWS WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED TO YOU OTHERWISE..!

チャリ

SOME OF US ACTUALLY WORK.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

Mrs Donut

YOU CAN SHOWER UP IN MY ROOM AND BORROW SOME CLOTHES.

HERE ARE SOME DONUTS.

HEY, I WORK TOO!

ANYWAYS, I'M IN THE WAY.

I'LL CLEAN UP AND GET OUT OF HERE..

THANK YOU.

I APPRECIATE YOU BEING SO NICE TO ME. SORRY I'M SO FEISTY.

HERE'S A SPARE KEY.

YOU CAN CRASH HERE...

...UNTIL YOU FIND A PLACE.

NOW! I'VE GOTTA GO TO WORK.

JUST ONE SONG... PLEEEZ...!

JEEZ..

BEFORE YOU LEAVE, CAN YOU PLAY ME A SONG!

THAT'S A GUITAR YOU'RE CARRYING, RIGHT!

♫

♫

When my goblet's filled with flame
Quench your driving thirst for fame
Looking back in shame
Won't set you free again.

With your beating heart to blame
Me for tearing down your game
Wild beast to tame
Won't let me flee again.

♪

♪

♪

きゃ

THERE-- SONG'S OVER.

KENT! YOU'RE A GENIUS-- TOTALLY INTENSE STUFF.

HIS MUSIC...

I FEEL SUCH PAIN INSIDE...

...I THINK THERE'S A STRONG BOND BETWEEN US.

...YOU KNOW... KENT...

...MAYBE THERE IS... A...BOND...

WELL...

THAT WARMTH..

...I CAN FEEL IT AGAIN...

...DEEPER THAN EVER-- MAKING MY FACE BLUSH.

ドキ

IT'S RAINING ...♪

♪ ...MEN! ♪

ドキ

BOND...!

NOTHING LIKE A LITTLE MORNING EXERCISE--

YAAAAWWWN --

THING --?!

KENT!

I'LL GIVE YOU A THING-- RIGHT BETWEEN THE EYES! WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?!

LOWER YOUR DECIBEL COUNT...

WHAT IS THIS THING DOING HERE WITH YOU? I THOUGHT I, HIKARU, WAS ALL THAT YOU EVER NEEDED!

HIKARU, CHILL OUT. SHE JUST MOVED TO JAPAN AND HAS NOWHERE TO SLEEP

YOU JUST TREAT ME LIKE DIRT, AS USUAL. KENT, YOU'RE SO CRUEL!

YOU DON'T EVEN CARE, KENT, DO YOU?

ROOMMATE.

I'M HIKARU, KENT'S--

UH HUH...

...A PESKY, GAY ROOMMATE...

Well, I suppose I can let her use my bed, so can we share yours? ♡

GREAT...

No. I'm fine with the couch.

THESE WILL FIT ME WELL WITH JUST A FEW ADJUSTMENTS ... ♡

Snip ♫ Snip

Wait, Kent! >

KENT SAID I COULD BORROW SOME CLOTHES...

SEEMS LIKE KENT'S GOT A BIT TOO GENEROUS OF A HEART...

Come on, Kent. Why don't you feel the same way I do? ☆

Hikaru, you're annoying me again ...

KENT ALREADY LEFT--HEY!

THOSE ARE MY CLOTHES!!

OOOPS. I'LL GIVE THEM BACK LATER.

KENT, I PICKED OUT A FEW CLOTHES TO BORROW!

♡ JUST A LITTLE FASHION REDESIGN.

WHAT DID YOU DO TO THEM?!

MORE LIKE FASHION-*FREE* DESIGN...

I WON'T LET YOU HAVE KENT.

I'M HIKARU. HOW ABOUT *GAME OVER*?

LET'S START OVER. I'M AI, NICE TO MEET YOU.

DAISUKE, PLEASE LET ME IN TODAY, TOO. ♡

Shinjuku University

新宿大学図書館

STUDENT ID, PLEASE.

KENT!

IN EXCHANGE FOR A DATE--

THESE ART BOOKS JUST CAME IN TODAY.

...

WINK

Kent, man, you're crampin' my style.

HIS WARMTH REMINDS ME OF SOMETHING...

THANK YOU.

...WITH YOUR SEARCH.

GOOD LUCK...

JUMBLE

...BUT ALL THESE BOOKS ARE JUST CONFUSING THINGS.

I THOUGHT IT WAS COMING BACK TO ME...

HM...?

AI...

IF ONLY I COULD AT LEAST REMEMBER WHO I AM. I ONLY RECALL MY NAME-- AI...

♪

SOMETHING DEEP INSIDE ME...IT'S BECOMING MUCH CLEARER NOW...

--AL...

THERE'S THAT RED BOOK FROM YESTERDAY! WHAT'S IT DOING HERE...?

I CAN SEE...

...I CAN SEE SOMEONE CALLING TO ME...

AI...

YOU'RE ONE-OF-A-KIND...

...YOUR SECRET MUST BE KEPT JUST THAT...

YOU WERE NAMED AFTER OUR GREAT KINGDOM AI-LAND

YOUR NAME AI...

WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

WHO ARE YOU?!

WAIT. YOU'RE FADING AWAY!

MY BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTER--

--PRINCESS AI.

I'M...

...FROM AI-LAND.

...PRINCESS AI...

I CAN SEE THE CREST...

HUH?

OH, SORRY...

ARE YOU OKAY?

AI...

AI...!

...BEFORE THE TROUBLE BEGAN...

THAT VISION WAS MY FATHER...

I CAN VAGUELY REMEMBER THE KINGDOM...

CLUB Cupid

SO, SHINJI --A GIRL WITH RIPPED CLOTHES?

YOU'RE PICKING UP THE DREGS NOWADAYS. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NEXT, RAID THE ORPHANAGE?

TONIGHT WILL BE A BUSY NIGHT FOR YOU.

AFTER YOU MEET ALL THE OTHER GIRLS AND THE STAFF, YOU'LL LEARN HOW TO ENTERTAIN THE CLIENTS.

CLEARLY YOUR MATURITY LEVEL DOESN'T MATCH YOUR AGE.

First Hikaru, now this one...

YOU BETTER WATCH THAT SCUMMY MOUTH OF YOURS!

WHAT?!

OH, MY MISTAKE. I DIDN'T KNOW YOU HAD A SENIORITY SYSTEM HERE.

EXCUSE ME.

I'M SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING!

WELCOME BACK, SIR.

OH, HI, TAKESHI!

INSTEAD OF MIKA, PLEASE SEND THAT NEW GIRL TO MY TABLE.

TONIGHT, I'D PREFER A DIFFERENT HOSTESS...

ME?

THERE YOU ARE.

AI, CLUB CUPID RULE NUMBER ONE: BE KIND TO THE CLIENTS.

NEVER INSULT A CLIENT-- IF THEY'RE NOT SATISFIED, WE'LL ALL LOSE OUR JOBS!

HEY, PUT THOSE EYES BACK IN THEIR SOCKETS!

THAT'S OKAY.

BUT, SIR, THIS IS HER FIRST DAY I'M AFRAID SHE HASN'T BEEN PROPERLY TRAINED

DON'T TOUCH ME!

NO HARM, NO FOUL.

CLUB CUPID RULE NUMBER TWO: ALWAYS SMILE WHEN HOSTING.

THIS IS NOT GOOD... NOT GOOD AT ALL...

ginger ale

WOW, YOU CAN REALLY DRINK!

I'M AI.

AI?

PRINCESS?? COULD HE KNOW?!

WHAT'S YOUR NAME, PRINCESS?

I'M TAKESHI.

I THOUGHT MY JOB WAS TO SING, REMEMBER?

PATIENCE, AI, PLEASE... TAKESHI HERE IS A V.I.P.!

YOU'RE NOT FROM JAPAN, "PRINCESS AI."

SO...

Heh heh

I'M GOOD, EH? "AI" AND "LAND"-- YOUR OWN "ISLAND" CALLED "AI-LAND"--HEH!

MAYBE YOU'RE FROM YOUR OWN ISLAND, "PRINCESS AI." MAYBE IT'S EVEN CALLED "AI-LAND!"

HMM...

WHY DON'T YOU GUESS?

WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

ALL JOKING ASIDE...

...I CAN TELL THERE'S SOMETHING SPECIAL ABOUT YOU.

THIS GUY... DOES HE KNOW WHO I AM...? SEEMS LIKE TOO MUCH OF A COINCIDENCE...

TO "PRINCESS AI"-- CLUB CUPID'S NEWEST...

HOW ABOUT A TOAST?

...ANGEL...

COUGH

AI?

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

COUGH

--AI?!

!

...I'M OKAY.

?

I JUST HAD A SUDDEN COUGH...

QUICK-- BRING SOME WATER!

!

LET'S FINISH OUR TOAST.

ginger ale, of course

TAKESHI'S WEIRD COMMENTS AT THE CLUB... THAT RED BOOK AND ITS CREST... THAT VISION OF MY FATHER AND THE BEAUTIFUL KINGDOM...

THINGS ARE MOVING SO QUICKLY...

ｻﾞｰｰｰｰ

IT'S REALLY RAINING HARD.

GOOD THING SHINJI LENT ME A CLUB CUPID UMBRELLA.

I RAN AWAY... FROM THE KINGDOM...FROM THE TROUBLE...

WHY? WHAT HORRIBLE TROUBLE HAPPENED THERE? IT SEEMED SO BEAUTIFUL AND PEACEFUL IN THAT VISION...

I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT I FEEL SUCH PAIN WHEN I TRY TO REMEMBER THE KINGDOM.

MY SEARCH...

IT'S UP TO ME...

IT'S UP TO ME TO FIND THE ANSWERS.

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR SEARCH.

I FEEL IT DEEP INSIDE ME.

I'M HERE FOR A REASON... FOR A PURPOSE... FOR THE KINGDOM...

YOU'RE SOAKING WET.

KENT!

I DIDN'T HAVE AN UMBRELLA...

HUH?

OH.

WAS HE WAITING FOR ME...?

WAS HE WORRIED ABOUT ME BEING OUT THIS LATE?

WEIRD...

HE COULDN'T HAVE BEEN WORKING THIS WHOLE TIME...?

YOU'RE WET AND COLD!

YOU'RE GOING TO GET SICK!

WHY...

HUH?

IT'S LIKE YOU DROPPED INTO MY LIFE FROM HEAVEN-- LIKE AN ANGEL.

YOU'RE SUCH A MYSTERY TO ME. WHY DO YOU HAVE ME UP LATE-- THINKING ABOUT YOU...WAITING FOR YOU...WORRYING ABOUT YOU...?

!

WHY WERE YOU CRYING?

COUGH

COUGH

AI?

ARE YOU...

!

WOOZY

...OKAY?

I'M..

...

SLEEPY

...

.....

DOES THIS MEAN I HAVE TO CARRY YOU HOME AGAIN?

YEAH?

UM...

KENT...

CHAPTER 2

FIN

CHAPTER 3

ぼあ

WHERE...

...AM I?

KENT!

ACTUALLY, COME TO THINK OF IT, IT SMELLS LIKE...

HMM...

SMELLS NICE...

↑ blanket

I...

KISSED

HIM...!

THIS ROOM.

IT'S STARTING TO COME BACK TO ME...

THIS BED...

YES, I WAS COMPLETELY EXHAUSTED AND PASSED OUT IN HIS ARMS, BUT STILL...

I CAME ON TO HIM...

OH, SHIT!!

UGH!

I CAN'T REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED NEXT...

UH...

OH...

I DIDN'T... SCREW HIM, DID I...?!

MY PANTIES LOOK UNSCATHED-- I MUST HAVE BEEN A GOOD GIRL.

OH, GOOD...

PLOP

OUCH...

HE WENT LOOKING FOR ME...

...IN THE RAIN... SOAKING WET.

LAST NIGHT...

HMM... KENT'S ROOM...

...BUT MY REAL HEART KEEPS PUSHING ME TOWARDS KENT.

MY HEART-SHAPED BOX...

...KEEPS PULLING ME TOWARDS ITSELF...

KENT'S SHY LOOK...

HIS CONCERNED LOOK...

EVEN HIS LOOK WHEN HE'S ANGRY...

SEEING KENT--NO MATTER HIS MOOD, HIS LOOK--ALWAYS AFFECTS ME THE SAME WAY SOMETHING INSIDE ME JUST CLICKS.

GIMME SOME ADVICE HERE!

"Hi"

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE ON MY SIDE, RIGHT?

I NEVER NOTICED THIS KEYHOLE BEFORE!

HEY, WHAT'S THIS...?

huff

huff

ERRRRR... WHY WON'T YOU OPEN?!

I BET THERE'S SOMETHING SECRET INSIDE!

I'LL JUST HAVE TO BREAK YOU OPEN...

AREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO BE SOME KIND OF SPECIAL ITEM?

A few moments later...

THANKS TO KENT, I'M CLEAN AGAIN... AND THANKS TO HIKARU, I'LL HAVE FRESH CLOTHES.

Ai inflicts water torture on her heart-shaped box...

YOU GOOD-FOR-NOTHING...

WHY CAN'T I REMEMBER WHAT BROUGHT ME HERE?

WHO THREW THESE BOOKS HERE...?

Shinjuku University

ALL THESE BOOKS... THERE'S GOT TO BE SOME HINT...

BUT I CAN'T DENY MY FEELINGS FOR HIM.

DENYING MY FEELINGS...

...WOULD BE DENYING MYSELF.

ARE MY FEELINGS FOR KENT CLOUDING MY MEMORY?

ざわ

ざわ

Blood of Lilith

-- DENYING MYSELF...

THAT'S SOMETHING I'M VERY FAMILIAR WITH--

LILITH...

LILITH...?

.. YOU'RE PRINCESS AI'S TUTOR, SO YOU MUST KNOW. IS IT TRUE WHAT THE OTHER SERVANTS SAY?

..ISSA...

ABOUT QUEEN LILITH!

ABOUT WHAT?

QUEEN LILITH... WAS SHE MY MOTHER? WHY CAN'T I REMEMBER HER?

I NEVER EVEN.. SAW A PHOTO OF HER.

I WONDER WHAT SHE WAS LIKE. MY FATHER NEVER SPOKE ABOUT HER-- NOT EVEN ONCE.

LILITH...

IT'S COMING BACK TO ME NOW. I ONLY KNEW HER NAME...

SHOW MORE RESPECT FOR THE DECEASED!

AND WHY DID EVERYONE ALWAYS AVOID THE SUBJECT OF MY MOTHER?!

WHAT TRAGEDY WERE THEY TALKING ABOUT?

SOMETHING ABOUT IT MAKES ME FEEL SICK INSIDE.

...AND HORRENDOUS CRIMES.

BUT...

I'M SCARED! THEY SPEAK OF TRAGEDY...

ENOUGH OF THIS TALK!

LISSA, HOW CAN YOU JUST IGNORE IT?!

THIS BOOK IS ABOUT A DIFFERENT "LILITH," BUT I GUESS IT JARRED MY MEMORY...

IF YOU'RE CAUGHT SPREADING SUCH RUMORS, IT'LL BE YOUR HEAD!!

LISSA...

...SHE WAS MY ONLY REAL FRIEND...

LILITH...

BUT...

WHAT CAUSED MY MOTHER'S DEATH...?

IF ONLY I COULD FIND THE TRUTH...

...BUT I KNOW IN MY HEART THIS SECRET SOMEHOW RELATES TO MY MOTHER.

I CAN'T EXACTLY REMEMBER IT NOW...

MY SECRET-- THE ONE MY FATHER ALWAYS TOLD ME TO KEEP.

BACK AT HOME, JUST THE THOUGHT OF MY MOTHER..

...MADE MY THROAT DRY AND MY STOMACH DROP.

よろ よろ

WE'LL SEE WHO IS REALLY THERE FOR ME.

LITTLE BY LITTLE-- I'M STARTING TO REMEMBER PIECES.

EVENTUALLY, IT WILL ALL COME BACK TO ME.

WHEN IT'S ALL OUT IN THE OPEN, AND I FIND WHAT I'M HERE TO FIND.

UH OH, I'M LATE FOR WORK!

AAGH!

THE BOOKS...!

SLIP

KENT...

...WILL IT BE YOU...?

KENT! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!

HEY, I WORK HERE, UNLIKE *SOME* PEOPLE WHO DON'T EVEN HAVE STUDENT I.D.S.

PREVIOUS NIGHT'S HIGHLIGHT REEL♡

WHAT DID YOU DO TO ME LAST NIGHT AFTER I PASSED OUT?!!

BLUSH

WHACK

OWW!

OOOPS... SORRY 'BOUT THE HEELS.

OWW!

Jeez... WHY'D ya Have to Kick me...?!

I HAVE TO LET YOU KNOW--YOU MAY HATE ME. I'VE GOT A PART-TIME JOB WORKING LATE AT NIGHT...

...but I'm being GOOD!

RHED GHO!

OKAY, I BELIEVE YOU. NOW SHUT UP AND LISTEN!

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO KISSED ME! AFTER THAT, I JUST TUCKED YOU INTO BED AND WENT TO SLEEP ON THE COUCH...

WHERE?

UH... I SING. ♡

SO WHAT IS IT?

YES. ♡

IT'S A SAFE JOB?

WHEW... I COULDN'T BREATHE...

YOU KNOW, HIKARU'S REALLY GONNA FREAK WHEN HE SEES YOU IN HIS CLOTHES AGAIN.

I meant you could borrow MY clothes-- not His.

HEY, IT'S NOT MY BUSINESS TO JUDGE YOU, BUT BE CAREFUL. PLEASE.

OH...

AT CLUB ♡ CUPID.

...BUT I HOPE HE CAN DEAL WITH IT.

I'M GLAD I OPENED UP TO KENT...

...WHO WEARS THEM BETTER?

BUT...

くぅ～

—

YOU DO.

KINDA LIKE A PRINCESS.

WELL...

...THAT'S 'CAUSE I AM ONE! ♡

Hee ♡

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN...

...I'M PROUD TO INTRODUCE CLUB CUPID'S NEWEST ANGEL.

O_/!

AI!!

AI, PLEASE COME GRACE US WITH A SONG ON STAGE.

SO I'LL LET THIS ONE GO...

DON'T START

I'M IN A GOOD MOOD TODAY.

WITH ME,

BITCH!

IT'S SO EASY TO STEP ON THAT LONG DRESS OF YOURS.

OH...

...I'M SO SORRY.

HI!

MY NAME IS AI!

AI.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU?

AI...

HAVE YOU HEARD IT BEFORE?

?

WHY DON'T YOU JOIN ME IN THIS SEARCH OF MINE?

くるっ

I'VE HEARD THAT IT MEANS "LOVE."

OR PERHAPS IT MEANS "ME"...?

WHAT IS THAT TRASHY SLUT UP TO?

HUH?

THIS CLUB ONLY PLAYS STANDARDS_

CAN YOU PLAY LIKE THIS?

SCREEEECH

BRRR

だば
だば

HOW DID YOU SAY SOME-THING?

.....

MY CATS!

BOSS, YOU'VE GOT TO STOP HER!

WE CAN'T HAVE HARD ROCK AT CLUB CUPID !

I'M GOING TO KICK HER OUT!

AI

HERE SHE GOES

WHAT'S

……!

!

THIS SONG THAT KENT SANG...

When my goblet's filled with flame
Quench your driving thirst for fame
Looking back in shame
Won't set you free again.

With your beating heart to blame
Me for tearing down your game
Wild beast to tame
Won't let me flee again.

...IT RESONATES INSIDE ME AND GIVES ME SOME SORT OF ENERGY.

THAT'S IT, GUYS!

かあ

WHEN I THINK OF KENT, THE SONG JUST FLOWS OUT NATURALLY...

THIS ONE'S FOR YOU, KENT!

Touch me taste me hold me close to your beating heart.
Hushed plea no mercy boldly ghost to your bleeding art.

Singe me lynch me force upon me your beating heart
Fringe plea for ecstasy forge it on me your bleeding art
Prison key forever free whore for your breeding art
Crimson sea to drench me pour it on me your bleeding heart

Sing it!

Alright!

I love you, Ai!

COOL...

SAME HERE-- AND I DON'T EVEN LIKE METAL!

SOMETHING ABOUT THIS SONG JUST WARMS ME UP INSIDE.

HEY!

IF IT'S UP TO ME TO SHUT YOU UP, THEN SO BE IT.

VULGAR MUSIC FROM A VULGAR BITCH.

I'M GONNA TEACH YOU A LESSON, YOU OLD HAG!

SOMEONE BREAK THEM UP!

HOW DARE YOU!

GO BACK TO THE STREETS WHERE YOU BELONG, WHITE TRASH!

BOTH OF YOU STOP IT!

THE CLIENTS ARE WATCHING!

rip

Not a "STRIP SHOW" but a "TIP SHOW" ...

...BUT WITH ONLY ONE BOOB.

THINK OF IT AS DOING A SHORT STRIP SHOW...

VERY FUNNY, JEN. I LIKE MY CLOTHES RIPPED, BUT NOT BY SOMEONE ELSE.

AT LEAST I ENDED UP GETTING MY REVENGE...

Al flooted Mika with a sharp right

SHE'S USED TO BEING THE STAR HERE, AND NOW YOU'RE HER RIVAL.

SHE'S DESPERATE TO GET THE SPOTLIGHT BACK FROM YOU.

DON'T LET MIKA GET TO YOU-- SHE'S JUST JEALOUS.

BARE BOOB!

BOOOO

!

AS A FELLOW GAIJIN, I CAN TOTALLY [redacted] TO YOU.

I WENT THROUGH A LOT HERE, COMING TO JAPAN FROM ENGLAND.

WHEN I FIRST JOINED THE CLUB, MIKA EVEN GAVE *ME* TROUBLE.

...THANKS FOR HELPING ME.

I SAW YOU SINGING YESTERDAY-- YOU'VE GOT TALENT.

JEN...

SURE, NO PROBLEM. LET ME HAVE THE DRESS.

I never had to sew in Ai-Land...

DO YOU KNOW HOW TO SEW?

MAYBE YOU CAN HELP ME FIX THE RIP?

HERE.

BUT *YOU* WERE AMAZING!

THANKS.

HAYABUSA Talent Agency

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HMPH... YOU'RE A PRO.

THOSE GOLDEN EYES AND EARS OF YOURS HAVE LAUNCHED MANY A STAR.

SHE JUST PERFORMED AT CLUB CUPID, BOSS. BELIEVE ME, IT WAS AMAZING. SHE REALLY IS LIKE A PRINCESS IN APPEARANCE, AND THEN SHE'S LIKE A WILD ANIMAL ON STAGE.

IT'S AN INCREDIBLE COMBINATION-- SHE HAS DEFINITE STAR POWER.

I WANT THIS ONE, TAKESHI-- SIGN HER UP.

NO PROB...

USE WHATEVER MEANS NECESSARY...

...BUT YOU MUST MAKE AI MINE

CHAPTER 3

FIN

Princess

CHAPTER 4

110
11/17

KAZ...

STEP

...HOW COULD YOU HAVE SENT TESS? AI'S NOT THE ONE WE'RE FIGHTING!

HOW DARE YOU TALK THAT WAY ABOUT HER-- YOU DON T KNOW HER!

STOP!

NORA, THIS SECOND REVOLUTION IS NO WHIMSICAL FROLIC. AI HAS BLINDED YOU TO THE TRUTH

PERHAPS NOT, MY COUSIN. BUT IT SEEMS TO ME THE ONE YOU DON T KNOW IS YOURSELF

!

YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT SHE'S DOING TO YOU AI'S NOT ONLY HUMAN, SHE'S THEIR ROYAL PRINCESS.

THEY'RE OUR ENEMY-- AND WE MUST CONQUER THEM AT ALL COSTS.

WE MUST ALSO CONQUER THE HATRED INSIDE OURSELVES.

AH, TESS.

SHE'S BEEN GIVEN HER ORDERS.

!

AND WHAT ABOUT TESS?

WHAT HAPPENS ON THE OTHER SIDE IS NOW UP TO FATE.

Shinjuku University

新宿大学図書館

HM...?

SOMETHING SMELLS STRANGELY FAMILIAR-- IT WON'T BE LONG NOW...

OW!

.....!!

YOU PRETTY BOY! WHERE IS SHE? WHERE IS AI?

LEAVE ME ALONE!

WHUD!

!

YOU BETTER PRAY WE DON'T MEET AGAIN...

YOUR BLOOD IS MINE NOW

...

my neck.

THAT BUM'S STILL IN BED--

KENT, YOUR NECK!

WHERE'S AI?!

I THOUGHT YOU WERE AT WORK...

OH, KENT.

KENT...

...YOU'RE HURT...?!

WHAT A BIZARRE DREAM...

creak

Eww.. BLOOD.....

THIS IS TERRIBLE. WHAT HAPPENED--?

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. I REALLY HAVE TO TALK TO AI...

...THESE SCRATCHES RUN DEEP...

OH...

AI...

YOU GET AWAY FROM MY KENT!

...WHO IS THAT WITCH?!

SHE'S A DEMON!

!!

KENT, IT'S THIS SLUT'S FAULT, ISN'T IT?!

AM I STILL DREAMING...?

KENT WAS... ATTACKED!

WITCH ...?

KENT-- I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO GET YOU INVOLVED.

!

THE ONLY THING I REALLY KNOW IS MY NAME.

DEMON ...!

I DON'T KNOW WHO I AM-- OR EVEN WHAT I AM.

YOU KNOW, I CAN'T SAY HE'S WRONG. THE FACT IS-- I'M NOT NORMAL.

IT'S NOT FAIR FOR ME TO DRAG YOU INTO THIS. EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE FOR ME SO FAR--YOU'VE BEEN SO GOOD TO ME.

BUT NOW YOU'RE HURT--AND I'VE GOT TO LET YOU GO BEFORE IT GETS ANY WORSE...

THERE'S NO ROOM FOR YOU HERE-- GET OUT!

DAMN RIGHT, YOU FREAK! LOOK WHAT YOU'VE DONE TO MY KENT!

HIKARU...

SHUT UP!

...HIKARU'S RIGHT.

NO, KENT...

THE TRUTH IS FOR ME TO FIND.

BESIDES, I WANNA KNOW THE TRUTH.

DON'T LEAVE-- YOU SHOULDN'T BE OUT THERE ALL ON YOUR OWN!

AI..

GUESS IT'S MY FATE TO BE ALONE...

KENT--LET HER GO AND YOU STAY HERE WITH ME!

AI!

HOLD OUT YOUR HAND...

HERE YA GO!

I THINK YOU WERE LOOKING FOR THIS.

HI AGAIN! ♡

ONLY A HEART ONCE BROKEN FINDS PEACE TO HEAL.

PA'AN...

...TOGETHER WITH MY HEART-SHAPED BOX!

!

IT'S GLOWING...

!

A KEY...?

♫ Open the door to your heart with my key... ♫

...AND OPEN...

JUST TURN IT...

THE KEY FITS MY BOX!

IT'S BEAUTIFUL. ANOTHER HEART SHAPE--WITH THE SAME SYMBOL AS THE ONE ON MY BOX AND THE RED BOOK'S CREST...

WOW...

♪ ..Just feel what's deep within your own heart.

I GOT IT, RIGHT?!

THESE LETTERS READ "AI," DON'T THEY?

AND THE CREST ON THE BOOK SAID "AI-LAND," RIGHT?

...IT SAYS MY NAME...

I CAN READ IT...

AI!

UH...

HM... THAT KEY...

WHY'D YOU HAVE IT ...?

...

ABOUT TIME...

THAT WAS FUN--I WANT TO READ SOME MORE!

Yay!

She finally remembered something..

NO... WHO?

WHAT? CAN'T YOU SEE I'M TALKING TO SOMEONE!

HEY, PRINCESS AI! ♡

That reminds me, I'm late for work...

OH, THAT GUY FROM THE CLUB...

POOF

HE'S... GONE!

He always does that!

WANT A RIDE?

I'M HEADED TO CLUB CUPID.

HM...?

AN ANEMONE ...?

I FEEL LIKE WALKING.

NO, THANKS.

LET ME SEE THAT FLOWER-- I'LL PUT IT IN YOUR HAIR.

NO.

I'LL DO IT MYSELF.

NO.

SO HOW ABOUT THAT PENDANT? LET ME PUT IT ON YOU.

BYE.

HEY, IT LOOKS GREAT ON YA!

すたすた

すたすた

...I WON'T BITE.

COME ON...

GOOD POINT.

YOU'RE ALREADY GONNA BE LATE.

Ha Ha!

SURE.

I JUST THINK WITH ALL THAT TALENT, YOU SHOULD SING FOR A LIVING.

I ALREADY DO.

YOU'RE REALLY AN AMAZING PERFORMER--BOTH YOUR SHOW AT CLUB CUPID AND EVEN ON THE STREET THE OTHER DAY.

ARE YOU TRYING TO FLATTER ME?

I don't know about that guy with the guitar, though...

Nice breeze ♫ ...

NOT FOR ME...

DON'T BE SILLY. SINGING AT A CLUB IN KABUKI-CHO ISN'T SINGING FOR A LIVING--I CAN PUT YOU IN A STADIUM.

NOT INTERESTED-- AND I LIKE MY PRIVACY. SORRY.

DON'T FRONT. I'M WITH H.T.A., AND WE DON'T MESS AROUND. WE'VE GONE TO NUMBER ONE WITH TEN ARTISTS IN A ROW--AND YOU, PRINCESS AI, COULD BE A GLOBAL STAR.

JUST THINK ABOUT IT.

PRIVACY? H.T.A. TAKES CARE OF ITS TALENT.

WE'LL PUT YOU IN A TOP-SECURITY CONDO--ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS FOCUS ON SINGING.

IS THERE REALLY SOME-ONE IN THIS WORLD WHO CAN TAKE CARE OF ME...?

...THE ONLY ONE THAT I FELT I COULD TRUST DEEP INSIDE...

THE ONE PERSON WHO TRIED TO TAKE CARE OF ME...

THANKS FOR THE RIDE.

HM...

YOU CAN TRUST US.

LET H.T.A. TAKE YOUR WORRIES AWAY, PRINCESS.

...WAS THE ONE PERSON I COULDN'T TAKE CARE OF.

AND YOU'RE IN A T-SHIRT AND SHORTS...?!

A GUY'S T-SHIRT, EH?

AI, YOU'RE LATE!

AND NOW I'M ALONE AGAIN...

YOURS ARE TOO SMALL.

SURE-- I'VE GOT A SPARE DRESS.

ARE THERE ANY CLOTHES I CAN BORROW?

YEAH, ESPECIALLY IN THE UPPER TORSO...

WOW--SHINJI'S GOT A NICE STASH...

SHINJI JUST BROUGHT THIS DRESS OVER.

IT'S GORGEOUS. TRY IT ON!

AM I TOO FLAT?!

With that figure, even a trash bag would look good.

IT'S PERFECT ON YOU!

.....

Snip

Snip

Snip

HMPH.

MUCH BETTER.

.....

I'M JUST PARTICULAR ABOUT MY FASHION.

AI, YOU'RE A BLAST!

SIT DOWN-- LET ME DO YOUR MAKE-UP.

UH...EXCUSE US... TIME FOR OUR SHIFT...

SHINJI'S gonna be PISSED

THAT DRESS WAS PRICEY...

AH HA HA HA HA!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

WELL, THEY HAD A THING BEFORE. CLEARLY, HE'S INTO YOU NOW.

SHE CALLED IN SICK. I BET HER FACE IS STILL SWOLLEN FROM THAT PUNCH YOU THREW HER.

SO, WHERE'S MIKA THE QUEEN BEE?

PART OF MIKA'S PROBLEM WITH YOU IS TAKESHI.

SHE'S LUCKY I WENT EASY ON HER...

OUCH...I FEEL FOR HER...

THAT'S SWEET OF YOU.

TAKESHI'S A PLAYER...

MIKA AND TAKESHI..?

YEAH, MIKA WANTED TO GET INTO H.T.A.

BUT SHE COULDN'T MAKE THE CUT, AND TAKESHI FINALLY DUMPED HER.

SHE THREW HERSELF ON TAKESHI, WHO JUST WENT WITH IT.

AI, THAT COULD BE YOUR BIG BREAK.

IF YOU SIGN WITH THEM, YOU'LL BECOME A STAR!

H.T.A.'S THE HOTTEST TALENT AGENCY IN JAPAN.

GET OUTTA HERE!

TAKESHI WANTS ME TO SIGN UP WITH H.T.A.

--ITS PRESIDENT-- HAYABUSA...

...HE'S SUPPOSEDLY CONNECTED BIG-TIME WITH THE YAKUZA.

HM.

THEY SAY H.T.A.--

ONLY ONE THING...

WHAT?

THANKS, JEN.

KINDA SCARY, Y'KNOW?

Hair extensions and all

OKAY, YOU'RE ALL DONE!

IT'S NOT LIKE I CAN JUST PRETEND EVERYTHING OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS NEVER HAPPENED.

...THE TRUTH IS FOR YOU TO FIND...!

Kabuki-cho Ichiban-gai

歌舞伎町一番街

AI...

WHERE CAN I FIND A BOOK THAT'S GOT ILLUSTRATIONS IN IT?

HOW CAN YOU FIGHT THAT WITCH ALL ON YOUR OWN...!

YOU...PRETTY BOY! WHERE IS SHE...? WHERE IS AI...?!

WHAT DOES THAT WITCH WANT WITH YOU...!

I THINK THERE'S A STRONG BOND BETWEEN US.

...WHO...

...ARE YOU...?

AI...

HI SWEETIE-- HOW ABOUT JOINING US?

DRINKS ON THE HOUSE-- ♡

...DON'T THINK YOU CAN JUST FLY AWAY NOW!

YOU DROPPED INTO MY LIFE LIKE AN ANGEL...

あ

あぅ

AI--?

NO, BUT WE'LL TREAT YOU BETTER THAN SHE DOES.

I'M LOOKING FOR SOMEONE.

DOES A GIRL NAMED AI WORK AT THIS CLUB?

LET... LET GO OF ME--!

NEW CLIENT-- PARTY OF ONE! ♡

HEY-- I'M NOT HERE TO PARTY!

NO, SHE'S MY FRIEND...

HEY, HE'S KINDA CUTE...

YOU CAN SEE HER LATER-- JOIN US FOR A DRINK!

ひた

BEING A HOSTESS SUCKS!

WHAT A PAIN.

ク

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I'VE GOT NO PLACE TO SLEEP!

I THOUGHT SHINJI HIRED ME TO SING.

I'VE GOT TO HANG IN THERE--

--AFTER ALL, CLUB CUPID PAYS ME WELL.

HOW CAN A PRINCESS BE *HOMELESS*?! THIS ISN'T FAIR. WHAT DID I DO TO DESERVE THIS...!

RING!

ANYONE HERE...?!

I WANT TO STAY HERE!

RING FOR S

RING RING RING RING RING

HELLO?!

Hotel Sunset Strip

ALL I'VE GOT TO DO IS FIND A HOTEL.

I'VE NEVER DONE THIS BEFORE, BUT OH WELL...

ANYWAY, CAN I GET A ROOM FOR THIS MUCH?

I GOT CUSTOMERS TRYIN' TO SLEEP HERE!!

OH, YEAH, SORRY.

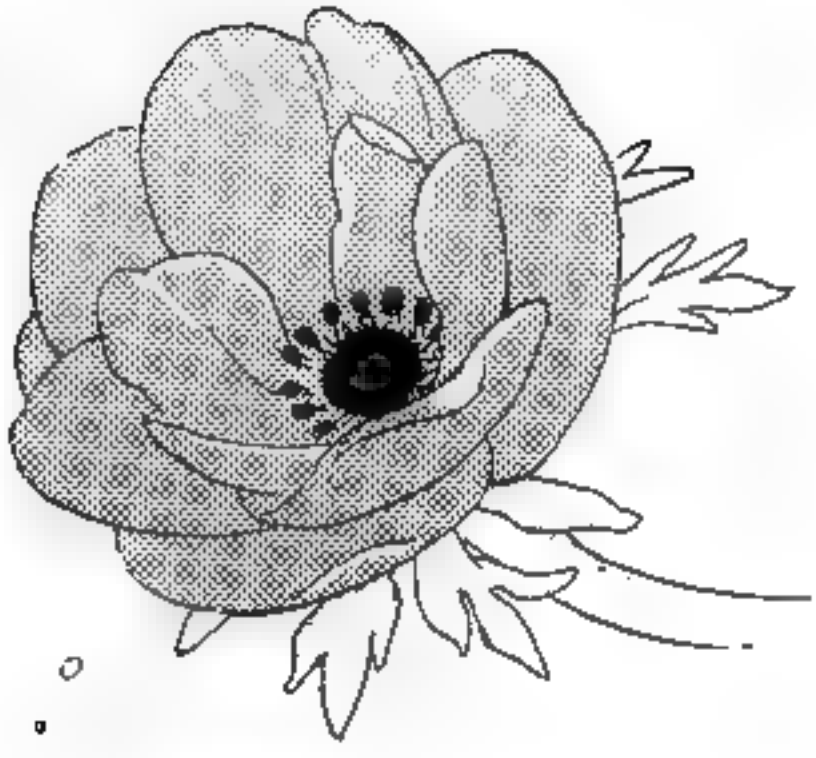
OOPS-

JEEZ! D'YA KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS?!

WELL, WELL,
PRINCESS
I HAVE FINALLY
FOUND YOU!

CHAPTER 4

FIN



Princess Ai

CHAPTER

5

I SLEPT LIKE A ROCK-- THESE PAST FEW DAYS HAVE BEEN TOO MUCH FOR ME.

UH OH... MY BOX IS FLASHING!

GLOW

AND WHY DOES EACH FLASH MAKE MY HEART RACE?

THIS HEART-SHAPED BOX OF MINE...WHEN IT FLASHES, WHAT DOES IT MEAN...?

THE GARDEN'S ON FIRE!!

HELP!

THE FIRE DEPARTMENT'S ON ITS WAY!

OH, MY GOD!

UGH UGH

...SO, THE LITTLE PRINCESS HAS FINALLY AWAKENED

WELL, WELL..

I REMEMBER HER... FROM AI-LAND...

I THOUGHT I'D HAVE TO BURN DOWN THE ENTIRE BUILDING BEFORE YOU SCAMPERED OUT LIKE A RAT

SHE'S TESS-- ONE OF THE FURIES!

ABOUT TIME I FOUND YOU!

TIME TO RUN...!

!

GET THE HOSES!

I HAVE TO DRAG THAT ROYAL BITCH BACK TO AI-LAND ALIVE-- HOW ANNOYING! IF ONLY KAZ WOULD JUST LET ME KILL HER...

EI

I CAN'T RUN IN THIS OUTFIT...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!

KENT?!

trip

UGH!

I KNEW I RECOGNIZED THAT SMELL...

JUST LET ME... SLEEP...

Belch

SO, I LEAVE AND YOU GO OUT AND PARTY?! SOME HELP YOU ARE!

!

NO...
LIQUID
...!!

SLOSH

MY POOR BABY...

SIZZLE

LET'S GO!

ROAAAR

I DON'T KNOW! BACK IN MY WORLD, SHE'S CALLED A FURIE. NOT TOO POPULAR WITH THE GUYS...

WHAT IS THAT THING?!

Her dragon wings spit fire!

GOT A BETTER PLAN?!

NO WAY! WE'LL JUST BE RISKING THEIR LIVES!

WE'VE GOT TO GET TO A STREET WHERE WE CAN FIND SOME PEOPLE...

AGH!!

AI!

GOTCHA! NOW YOU'RE COMING WITH ME!

.....

LET H.T.A. TAKE YOUR WORRIES AWAY, PRINCESS.

YOU CAN TRUST US.

YOU'RE MINE NOW!

LET GO!

WHACK

KENT!

I'VE NEVER BEEN ANYONE'S BEFORE--

SNAP

--SO I'M *DEFINITELY* NOT *YOURS!*

flap

GRAB

WINGS ...?!

OWW!

!!

A HUMAN WITH WINGS...?!

SNICKER! AND SHE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO USE THEM...

CYBER

CYBER

HHAAA

WATER

HHAAA

KEH...

KEH...

HI P P

MY CLOTHES ARE A MESS...

YOU HAVE... WINGS...?

flap

THANK HEAVENS YOU'RE OKAY!

WHAT... *ARE YOU...?*

I WISH THEY'D GO AWAY...

THINGS HAVE BEEN COMING BACK TO ME-- LITTLE BY LITTLE...

...BUT THESE WINGS... I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THEY MEAN.

HI P P

EVEN I DON'T KNOW.

JUST LIKE YOU

THOSE WINGS ARE BEAUTIFUL

...THANK YOU.

KENT

...YOU HAVE TO STAY AWAY FROM ME.

THANK YOU, KENT, BUT...

TAXI

I DON'T GET WHY YOU'LL BE ANY SAFER HERE.

AI, THIS IS WHERE YOU WORK?

LOOKS pretty HIGH-class.

THERE'S ONE THING I KNOW FOR SURE-- BEING AROUND ME IS VERY DANGEROUS.

WHAT?

KENT--

KENT, LET ME GO. THIS IS ALREADY HARD ENOUGH ON ME.

YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME. SOMETHING ABOUT YOU-- YOU'RE NOT LIKE ANYONE I'VE EVER MET.

AI, I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU-- YOU REALLY HAD ME WORRIED!

And, yes, I know you didn't know I was waiting...

AI!

HM?

GIVE IT UP!

OH, NOW I SEE--YOU THINK YOU'RE HER DUDE?

...!!

すっ

...YOU'LL JUST GET YOURSELF RUN OVER.

DON'T BE A DOG WHO CHASES SPEEDING CARS...

NOW I KNOW WHAT THOSE WINGS ARE FOR-- FLYING AWAY...

ARE YOU PREPARED TO PROTECT HER AGAINST ANYTHING?

NO ONE MESSES WITH H.T.A.-- AND THAT I CAN GUARANTEE.

YOU'D BETTER.

KENT...

KENT --!!

LET'S GO INSIDE.

TRUST ME-- THAT LOSER WOULD JUST BE KEEPING YOU DOWN.

YOU'RE YOUNG.

IF YOU THINK YOU CAN TAKE CARE OF ME, HOW ABOUT ASKING ME WHAT I THINK?!

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TRUST IS.

AI... WAIT--!

WHAM

PLEASE... JUST MEET HIM FIRST-- THEN DECIDE...

HAYABUSA CAME TO SEE YOU TONIGHT.

PRINCESS AI...

YOU MADE IT!

HMPH!

MR. HAYABUSA, SIR, SORRY TO HAVE KEPT YOU WAITING.

TAKESHI HAS SPOKEN HIGHLY OF YOU.

AH, THE ILLUSTRIOUS PRINCESS AI.

THIS IS AI.

SO TELL ME, AI, WHAT IS YOUR DREAM?

AS TAKESHI SAID, YOU ARE STUNNING.

...MY WAY HOME.

TO FIND...

WHY DON'T WE CHAT FOR A BIT?

TAKESHI MENTIONED THAT YOU ARE CONSIDERING OUR OFFER.

RELAX, MISS AI.

NOW I'VE MET YOU--SO WHAT'S THE POINT OF ALL THIS?!

YOU SEEM TO HAVE A BIT OF A CHIP ON YOUR SHOULDER, MISS AI.

HMM?

JH OH.

LET GO OF ME!

I NEVER SAID I WAS CONSIDERING ANYTHING!

IN NO TIME...

...YOU'LL BECOME THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE...

WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU-- TO PROTECT YOU, TAKE CARE OF YOU, AND INVEST IN YOU.

H.T.A. WILL BE YOUR NEW HOME--YOU'LL BECOME THE CENTER OF H.T.A.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN-- CLUB CUPID'S VERY OWN ANGEL, AI!

GET READY TO GO DEAF...

COME ON, MIKA, A LITTLE HARD ROCK NEVER HURT ANYONE!

Cute wing costume!

SOMETIMES YOUR HEART SPEAKS FOR YOU.

MY SEARCH-- AND EVERYTHING IMPORTANT THAT COMES WITH IT-- HAS JUST BEGUN. NOW I MUST FINALLY LEARN TO FOLLOW MY HEART.

SHE'S SINGING A BALLAD!

Hey this life is never fair
The angels that you need are never there

Oh, but sometimes he comes to me

In the dead of winter,

dead of night

He's all that I can see

WOW

SHE'S SO TALENTED...

HMPH.

Hold on to me

Hold on to me

I DON'T WANT TO LOSE HER.

I JUST MET HER, BUT I ALREADY...

I ALREADY FEEL AS MOVING ON... BEYOND THIS PLACE.

But there's no truth at the heart of any of it

Just the brilliance

And the passion

And the bitterness remains

!

I'll protect you from the truth

You won't hear it all

I am...

!

UMPH!

...e center of the universe

PART OF THE SHOW..

BUT IT SOUNDED LIKE A GUNSHOT!

NO

DO YOU THINK THAT WAS AN ACCIDENT?

WHAT WAS THAT...?!

AGH'

YOU GOT LUCKY, AL...

KILL

WHAT'S GOING ON?!

HEY, THE LIGHTS !!

NOW *THAT* WAS A SHOW...

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Everyone, Please remain calm!

非常口

DO YOU REALLY KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GETTING INTO WITH ME?

MISS AI...

THIS WAY, MISS AI.

!

...DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE?

INDEED...

I'M READY TO FIND OUT.

EACH STEP OF THE WAY, I FEEL... ONCE AGAIN...!!

...ALONE.

AM I RUNNING AWAY AGAIN...? OR IS THIS ALL PART OF MY SEARCH...?

CHAPTER

5

FIN

IN THE NEXT VOLUME OF

Princess Ai's journey of discovery has only just begun, but it seems each new revelation only brings new mysteries:

What is the story of the Second Revolution? Could there be dissension in the rebels' ranks? If so, will it make things better or worse for our Princess-on-the-run?

Can Takeshi, the gun-toting talent scout, and H.T.A. protect Ai from the furious Furie known as Tess? Or will these pistol-packing record producers meet their supernatural match?

Speaking of supernatural, where did Ai's wings come from? What do they mean? Will they help her fly closer to the answers she seeks or will she end up spiraling out of control?

Finally, will Ai shine in the glare of the spotlight or will she be blinded to her true calling, her real life, and her true love?

Enlightenment awaits in
Princess Ai Volume 2: Lumination!

Courtney Love

America's Sweetheart

Musician. Songwriter. Actress. Activist. Celebrity. Provocateur. There are few artists who fit into all of the above categories, performers whose life and work are impossible to pigeonhole. There is only one Courtney Love.

"AMERICA'S SWEETHEART" is Love's eagerly anticipated solo debut, the follow-up to Hole's two RIAA platinum-certified major label releases, 1994's classic "LIVE THROUGH THIS" and 1998's Grammy Award-nominated "CELEBRITY SKIN." The album was released in February 2004 – right on time for Valentine's Day

In addition to her many music-related activities -- including impassioned involvement in a variety of artists' rights-related issues -- Courtney is also continuing to pursue her love of acting. Love made her cinematic debut with a small role in Alex Cox's 1986 classic, *Sid and Nancy*, followed by widely praised appearances in a number of independent films, including 1996's *Basquiat* and *Feeling Minnesota*. Her much-celebrated turn as the tragic Althea Flynt in the 1996 film, *The People vs. Larry Flynt*, was a career breakthrough, earning her a Golden Globe nomination, along with "Best Supporting Actress" awards from the New York Film Critics Circle and the Boston Society of Film Critics, "Most Promising Actress" from Chicago Film Critics Association, and "Best Supporting Actress" runner-up from the Los Angeles Film Critics Association.

Courtney furthered her calling as an actress with acclaimed performances in such films as 1999's *200 Cigarettes*, 1999's *Man On The Moon* (which reunited her with *Larry Flynt* director Milos Forman), 2000's *Beat*, 2001's *Julie Johnson*, and 2002's *Trapped*.

Love's interest in the arts extends to the graphic -- the cover and much of the art inside "AMERICA'S SWEETHEART" was drawn by Olivia, (www.eOlivia.com) the world's premiere pin-up artist. Inheriting the mantle left by Vargas, Olivia has had one-woman shows of her art not only throughout the United States but also Japan.

In the meantime, Courtney Love has crafted what is unquestionably the definitive album of her already remarkable body of work. As startling as it is irresistible, "AMERICA'S SWEETHEART" makes it plain why the world is in love with Love

Courtney Love

DJ Milky

D.J. Milky likes to eat ramen late at night and oatmeal for breakfast. Addicted to digital and analog fusion, Milky is in a constant state of flux and irk. Life's one reward comes in the form of creating stories, music, and lately shooting *DV*.

Milky has composed a few songs for TOKYOPOP including "School's in Session" (*GTO*), "Initialize" (*Initial D*), "Worthy of Your Soul" (*Reign*), "The Power of Destiny" (*Rave Master*) and "Rave-olution" (*Rave Master*).

Along with *Princess Ai*, Milky is currently developing some new manga: *Juror 13* and *Treasure Chess*, as well as writing the novel *Karma Club* and the *Stray Sheep* books for children.

Milky often forgets which side of the road to drive on, overcompensating for this by staring intently into the vortex.

For more Milky musings or if you're simply bored out of your wits, stop by www.djmilky.com or e-mail milky@djmilky.com to say whaddup.

Editor Rob asked Milky about Princess Ai and what it has been like to work with Courtney, Kujiradou-san, and Yazawa-san:

"It's been inspiring for me to get a chance to work with some really talented people in various fields. Courtney is really a visionary who has gone through many trials and tribulations--Ai's character was really developed from Courtney and the fascinating breadth of her personality. Whenever there was a part of the story where I wasn't totally certain about how Ai would react, I would just think of Courtney and how I thought she would react--the two really began to blend together in my mind. I think if Courtney were to be reborn in a fantasy world, she would come out as Ai.

"Yazawa-san was so incredibly professional it blew me away. We were only able to afford a few hours of discussion together with Courtney and myself--mainly because of the schedule and geographical challenges. So, I wasn't sure if the imagery that Yazawa-san would deliver would truly embody the image of Ai that both Courtney and myself had in mind. When I first saw the initial pencils I couldn't believe it--I literally ran up and down the stairs with joy because Ai came out looking so beautiful, so sophisticated and yet the despair and loneliness inside her really resonated. Of course, the inks that followed and alternate poses were perfect. What an amazing talent!

"Last, but in no way least, it has really been a pleasure working with Kujiradou-san. Through our meetings, e-mails, faxes, and phone calls and with, of course, her talented editor, I really was impressed by her passion and intensity for the characters and their world. Kujiradou-san constantly challenged me with detailed and insightful questions about the characters, the scenes, their backgrounds and the plot. She encouraged me to think through the elements in a comprehensive and consistent manner. Her contribution has really been invaluable--and seeing her storyboards and pencils come through chapter by chapter has been magical. A co-production like this is very challenging, especially in the world of manga, but Kujiradou-san has been able to collaborate with patience and without compromise."

Misaho Kujiradou

MISAHO KUJIRADOU

Birthday: August 7th

Blood type: B

Born in Shizuoka Prefecture

Favorite Foods: Natto (fermented soybeans), crab, miso ramen

Least Favorite Foods: Red beans, cherry lobster, cold noodles

Desk Motto: If I do it, things will work out. So I do it.

Personality: Do things at my own pace. Stubborn. Timid. High-tech but I hate the phone (laugh).

Current Obsessions: Dolls (especially "Super Dolphy"), flower patterns (especially roses and gorgeous double-blossom floral patterns), the color pink.

Web site: *http://www.asahi-net.or.jp/~ci6r-tkhs/*

At the age of 10, Misaho Kujiradou's sister said "Let's draw manga!" That's how she got started and she soon came to think of it as the job she was destined for. She started submitting work when she was around 12 and in October, 1997, she made her debut in the monthly *South* magazine (which was later absorbed into the monthly *Wings* magazine) with "Time Trouble." Well known for her beautiful art and her way with screen tones, Misaho Kujiradou is currently drawing "Princess Ai" for *Wings*.

Manga creators who have inspired Misaho Kujiradou:

Ikeno Koi, Urakawa Masaru, Narita Minako, Hiwatari Saki, Takada Yuuzou, Takagawa Yun, Manabe Jyouji, Sawada Shou, Shirou Masamune, Yamada Akihiro (my mentor)... and many more.

Work List

1997
South Oct Issue (Shinshokan)
"JikannoKuninoRuruka"(Roughtranslation:"Ruruka oftheCountryofTime"a.k.a."TimeTrouble")-8pages
South Dec Issue (Shinshokan)
"Private Troops" - 24 pages

1999
Wings, June Issue (Shinshokan)
"Kimiwawatashanofudatsukinokamisama"(Rough translation:"You Are My God of Fame") - 40 pages. Thisslapstick,lovecomedywasthefirstworkforwhich Kujiradou-san received substantial comments and feedback. She also received her first fan letter for it!

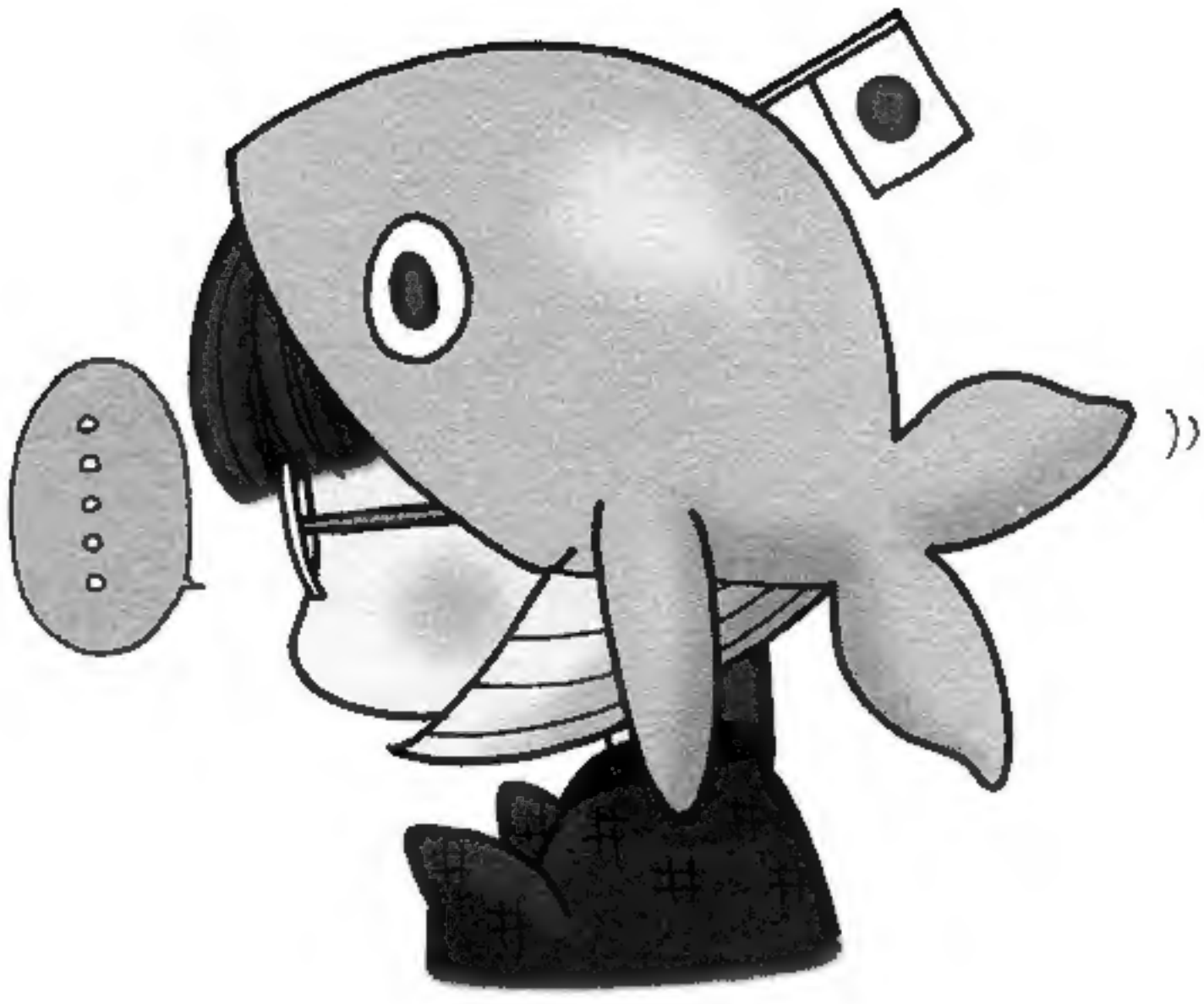
2000
Eyes, April Issue (Home-Sha)
"Majitsushitohandmainnokankei"(TheRelationship betweentheMagicianandtheHandmaiden)-32pages
Eyes, Dec Issue (Home-Sha)
"Oukoku no Wind Farm" (Wind Farm of the Kingdom) – 32 pages

2001
Eyes, June Issue (Home-Sha)
"Tsubasawodakumono"(Roughtranslation:"Those Who Embrace Wings") - 40 pages
Wings, October Issue (Shinshoukan)
"Neutralizer" - 34 pages
Eyes, Dec Issue (Home-Sha)
"Yanchanа Soulmate"(A Small Soulmate)-10pages

2002
Crimson, Nov Issue (Soubisha) "Komonryuu Kaiunsouhonke"(RoughTranslation:"KomonStyleMain House") – 32 pages

2003
Huckleberry Vol. 1 (Shinshakan)
"Mabataki kirameki meguru yaou" - 43 pages
Huckleberry Vol. 2 (Shinshakan)
"Mabatakikirameki meguruyaou-Jyungintsukiyano meikyuu" – 38 pages

2004
Wings, March Issue (Shinkasha-Currently running)
"Princess Ai"



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